



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT:
MICHELLE MOWERY JOHNSON
615-313-4707 (OFFICE)
615-272-0845 (PAGER)

MORE TENNESSEANS GETTING HELP FEEDING THEIR FAMILIES

FOOD STAMP PARTICIPATION CONTINUES TO RISE

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The Tennessee Department of Human Services continues to see an increase in number of families enrolled in the Food Stamp program. The number of households seeking assistance rose more than 16 percent from December 2002 to December 2003. Household cases jumped to 347,000, as compared to 298,000 cases in December 2002. The current number of individuals in those households totals nearly 797,000.

Food Stamp program benefits are 100 percent federally funded through the United States Department of Agriculture. The program is administered by Human Services and provides nutritional assistance benefits to children and families, the elderly, the disabled, unemployed and working families.

The rise in Food Stamp program participation can be attributed to a sluggish national economy and weak job growth. Outreach and education efforts on the part of the Department of Human Services and its partners have made many potentially eligible people aware of the program, as well.

Currently in Tennessee, more than \$60 million are issued in Food Stamp benefits each month. During the month of December 2003, \$66.4 million in Food Stamp benefits were issued. For the last state fiscal year, the average household size was 2.3 persons, and the average household monthly benefit was \$172.

For more information on the Food Stamp program and to view a county by county breakdown of Food Stamp participation and issuance, visit the Department of Human Services website at:
<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/fs-participation.htm>

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37248
615.313.4700

